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AUTHOR Dickey, Corinne
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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes a research study on women in three programs designed to recruit, retain, and graduate persons of color at the University of Minnesota. The literature on mentoring is reviewed in terms of social integration, academic integration, a supportive institutional climate, and quality mentoring. The study used qualitative case study methodology in interviews with students, faculty mentors, and administrators in the three mentoring programs, two of which (biological sciences and business administration) had limited minority participation and one (education) with relatively greater minority student and faculty representation. American Indian students were the focus of the program within the graduate school of business administration; all minorities and females within an intensive summer undergraduate workshop in biological sciences; and African Americans within the graduate program in education. Interviews examined how students, faculty, and administrators perceived the mentoring process, the climate at the University for persons of color, and how mentoring enriched students' experiences. Specific recommendations are offered to the regents; to the University president; to the vice presidents/administrators, deans, and departments; to the graduate school; to the faculty; and to graduate students. (Contains 29 references.) (MAH)

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# Mentoring Women of Color at the University of Minnesota: Challenges for Organizational Transformation

*Corinne Dickey*
*University of Minnesota*

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

# Mentoring Women of Color at the University of Minnesota: Challenges for Organizational Transformation

*Corinne Dickey*
*University of Minnesota*

*This dissertation research focuses on women in three programs (in a professional school, biological sciences, and education) designed to recruit, retain, and graduate persons of color at the University of Minnesota. The research examines: 1) how students, faculty, and administrators perceive the mentoring process of the programs, and 2) the climate at the University for persons of color and how mentoring would help enrich students' experiences. Challenges to the administration and suggestions for organizational change are also presented.*

However defined, diversity in academe generally has been granted high priority, yet it seems increasingly difficult to achieve. An article appearing in the July 26, 1989 issue of Chronicle of Higher Education discusses a survey conducted by the American Council on Education that included for the first time questions on minority recruiting at the college level. The article indicates the vast majority of colleges across the nation are attempting to increase the numbers of minority students on their campuses but success is modest, at best. It stressed that colleges must provide a hospitable climate for minorities if they are to be retained through to graduation. That climate includes the use of more minority faculty (page A27).

One expectation of education, and especially higher education, is to contribute to improvement of the social and economic well-being of individuals and groups within our society. Higher education could be one of the primary paths to the attainment of positions of economic and political power for members of minority groups. However, based on current research, on the whole, minorities have not been beneficiaries of policies that have sought to increase the recruitment, retention, and graduation of persons of color, to improve graduation standards, improve curricular offerings, and reduce teacher/student ratios.

The University of Minnesota, a large land-grant university, and the site of this research, has a commitment to diversity and to improving its ability to recruit and retain students and faculty of color. For example, University leadership has established the following system-wide goals:

1. Improve the retention of students of color by 50 percent of the current base;
2. Double the hiring of faculty of color;
3. Increase the enrollment of students of color to 10 percent of total University enrollment;
4. Strengthen the University's ongoing and new efforts to make diversity integral to academic priorities.

One significant issue the goals present is how they are to be achieved. This dissertation research specifically focuses on mentoring in higher education and is aimed at increasing the information base so that this university, and other universities as well, can improve effectiveness in recruiting, retaining, and especially in graduating women and all students of color. This research establishes, for the first time, a considerable body of scientific data on mentoring derived at this institution that can be used to enable meaningful policy and procedural decision making and that may be generalizable to other universities as well. This research starts with the position derived from current literature that mentoring is part of the important institutional dynamic of social integration of students.

Mentoring is an attractive approach to meeting the needs of students who are most at risk of leaving the university before graduation. It can improve retention rates by addressing some of the causes of attrition among these culturally diverse students. My research specifically investigated mentoring processes that may be integral factors in effective strategies for increasing the successful recruitment and retention of students of color in a university setting.

On the surface, the 1960's and 1970's were a positive time for those committed to expanding

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minority access to higher education. The establishment of a variety of programs, a major expansion of federal and state scholarship assistance for low-income students, and new efforts on many campuses to recruit and retain more nonwhite students were just a few of the initiatives emphasized during this period. Minority enrollments began to climb. However, college access for minorities persistently remained a problem. Upon closer inspection, researchers found that minorities were not entering the same kind of colleges as Whites. It was found that a declining number of minority high school graduates went on to four-year institutions. The reason for this is believed to be that the majority of persons of color who did go on to college were oftentimes mainstreamed into community colleges, where few transferred successfully to four-year institutions (Astin, 1985; Orfield, 1986:9-10).

Further, those minorities who today enter and graduate from college tend to be concentrated in certain fields of study. For example, for persons receiving doctorates in 1993, 9.3 percent of education doctorate degrees were awarded to Blacks, while for this same minority group, only 1.9 percent received degrees in engineering and 1.5 percent in physical sciences. Hispanics comprised 4.1 percent of doctorates in arts and humanities, but only 2.4 percent in engineering and 3.0 percent in physical sciences. American Indians were below 1 percent of doctoral recipients in all fields (e.g., 0.3 percent in arts and humanities, 0.8 percent in education, 0.1 percent in engineering, and 0.3 percent in physical sciences. The Chronicle of Higher Education, October 12, 1994).

Minorities as a whole are encouraged to behave like the majority White, middle-class even though this may go against their own deeply-ingrained cultural behavioral norms. By doing this, both Whites and minorities are missing out on the benefits that diversity can bring to the campus and to the society as a whole. Majority campuses, generally, historically have been nonwelcoming to students from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This is also true of the University of Minnesota. Minority students have expressed feelings such as the "climate" being cold and unwelcoming at the University of Minnesota (Turner, 1994). Others have stated that "retention rests on feeling connected" (Tabet, 1994).

In discussing African American students, Holland (1994) says:

> Studies have found colleges and universities have lost ground in the enrollment of African American graduate students . . . in the proportion of African American graduate and doctoral degrees granted . . . and in the participation by African Americans in research and faculty positions in its universities. . . . It is the belief of many scholars that the pipeline from which African American faculty are produced is drying up. Common explanations for the low flow of minorities in the pipeline . . . [is] that in general academe has been inhospitable towards African American students (page 2).

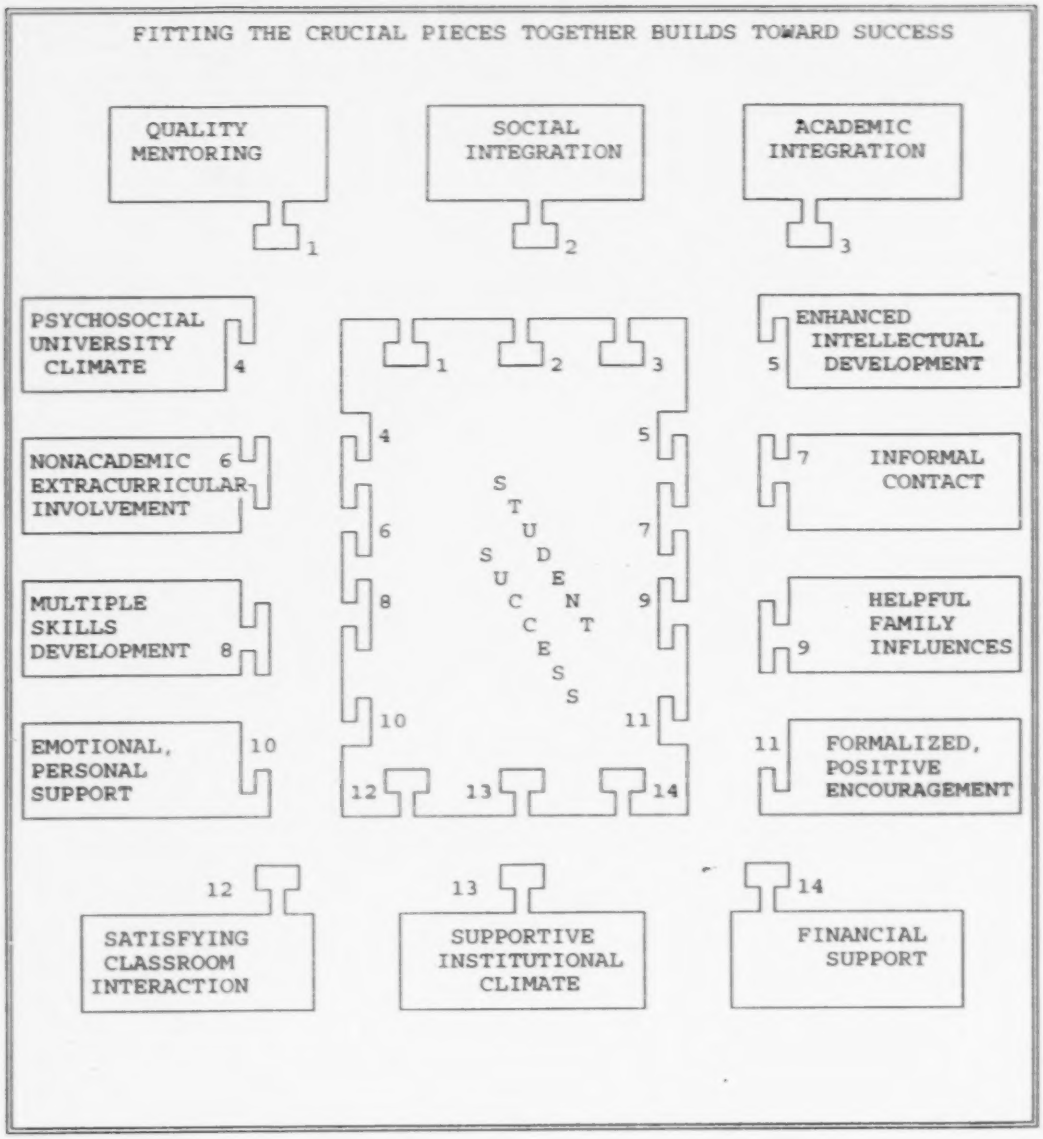
Holland (1994) makes the connection between the relatively few minorities in higher education and the importance of social interactions (such as mentoring) when he states:

> Limited interactions with the major advisor, the formal structure of the infrequent encounters, and the basic and routine academic guidance provided to the doctoral student render the involvements non-developmental. In these involvements, the advisor is not involved in nurturing or grooming the doctoral student (p. 8).

In a holistic sense, quality mentoring can be seen as a way of addressing society's injustices (Redmond, 1990). Redmond (1990) contends, and many other researchers agree (Astin, 1985; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1987, for example), that students frequently leave universities before graduation for reasons other than academic ones. For instance, the psychosocial climate of a university has a tremendous effect on students, especially those from culturally diverse backgrounds (Green, 1989; Smith, 1989; Kauffman, Carter and Hurtado, n.d.). The implications of these realities must be acknowledged by program administrators, mentors, and proteges. What are some of the factors that lead to student success in college? How do mentoring functions interact with other factors associated with student success?

The illustration on the next page is my conceptualization of some important factors leading to student success, including mentoring. The way I see mentoring improving student success includes not only the transfer of marketable academic skills, attitudes, and behaviors but also involves coexistence of

Figure 1. The Mentoring Relationship and Co-existing Factors Leading Toward Student Success



mutually interdependent factors contributing to development of a level of interaction, trust, and communication that, in turn, results in psychosocial comfort that empowers a student with the knowledge and confidence to grow. This means to experience both academic and personal development/growth. If such growth occurs, the student will be more likely to remain at the university until graduation, thus meeting the needs of the university to address the problem of attrition. In order to demonstrate how the various pieces shown here can assist student success, four factors--social integration, academic integration, supportive institutional climate, as well as quality mentoring--are discussed in further detail.

**Social and Academic Integration and Attrition**

There is a growing body of evidence indicating that social and academic integration tend to have a differential influence on persistence for different kinds of students (Astin, 1985; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1987). A central and recurring theme throughout Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) study of 20 years' of college student experiences is that "it is clear that many of the most important effects of college occur through students' interpersonal experiences with faculty members and other students" (page 644).

These same authors found in 1979 that the frequency of informal contact with faculty to discuss intellectual issues and the perceived quality of interaction with faculty and peers had their most positive influence on persistence for students who came from families where parents had relatively low levels of formal education.

There is also a growing body of evidence indicating that measures of social and academic integration tend to have a differential influence on persistence for different kinds of students. Mentoring is an attractive approach to meeting the needs of certain groups of students who are most at risk of leaving the university before graduation.

Based on the literature review, an assumption made in this present research is that faculty contact has a significant impact on the academic and social integration of students enrolled in colleges and universities. It is reasonable to assume, then, that the quality of faculty contact in the form of mentoring may have a significant impact on women students of color, the focus of my study.

**Supportive Institutional Climate**

To Astin (1975), student persistence depends to some extent on the degree of personal involvement in campus life and environment. An institution's cultural environment, therefore, was found to be very important. Richardson, Simmons and de los Santos (1987) state:

> Where minority student enrollment is closer to 10 percent, considerable attention is given to building an environment minority students perceive as hospitable....As enrollments of a specific minority group approach 20 percent, the environment changes from accommodation through special programs to incorporation into the mainstream of institutional culture (page 23).

They conclude that: "The best graduation rates occur where comprehensive and systematic institutional efforts are supplemented by strong support from system and state leadership" (page 26).

**Quality Mentoring**

Mentoring cannot be overlooked when examining the various contributors to student persistence. For minority students, mentoring programs can mean the difference between isolation and integration; failure and success. Social and academic integration levels of students in the higher education institution can be affected by mentoring.

Several variables have been found to be important in matching mentors and proteges and,

ultimately, to the success of the mentoring relationships. These variables include attention to gender, major area of interest, dominant personality traits, and sometimes race or ethnicity (Blackwell, 1989; Erkut and Mokrus, 1985; Gilbert, 1985; Knox, 1988).

Gender coupled together with ethnicity variables establishes another important function category of consideration in mentoring program design. As Carter, Pearson, and Shavlik (1988) state:

> At the intersection of race and gender stand women of color, torn by the lines of bias that currently divide white from nonwhite in our society, and male from female. The worlds these women negotiate demand different and often wrenching allegiances. As a result, women of color face significant obstacles to their full participation in and contribution to higher education...Collectively, today's women students are diverse in terms of age, social class, race, ethnicity, and religion. Their needs and learning styles often challenge the prevailing culture (page 98).

The work in this dissertation investigated the importance of mentoring in recruitment and retention. Focused on women students of color, this research examined factions from both psychosocial and sociological perspectives. The importance of these factors is highlighted by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) when they state:

> ...the extent and quality of one's social interaction with student peers and faculty...(have a) positive influence on persistence, educational aspirations, bachelor's degree attainment and graduate school attendance. This influence is largely independent of student precollege characteristics, the characteristics of the institution attended, and one's level of academic achievement during college. Thus, consistent with theoretical expectations, social interaction with significant others during college, and the encouragement received therefrom, exert an independent influence in the educational attainment process (page 418).

Mentoring addresses several causes of student attrition and delayed graduation, including the lack of proper academic preparation for college, the lack of knowledge about or access to social, academic, or financial resources, and the absence of a comfortable psychological milieu for matriculation (Gavin, 1989; Stampen & Cabrera, 1988).

My research study describes quality mentoring as a comprehensive, complex, interpersonal matrix of functions. Mentoring cannot be reduced to an advisor/advisee relationship. Certainly the advisor/advisee relationship is one important type of mentoring. However, to be most constructive and applicable, mentoring must be viewed in terms of multiple mentors and that everyone is a potential mentor. An advisor is primarily concerned with one's success as a student. A mentor (and an advisor can be a mentor) guides, protects, and empowers a protege; the mentor is concerned with the success of the whole person. Quality mentoring takes into account what I consider to be the most realistic of the mentoring definitions established to date, but, more importantly, it recognizes a critical component of effectiveness which has neither been emphasized nor thoroughly considered in any of the mentoring research examined; namely, the reciprocal aspect of the mentoring relationship. I envision mentoring as a two-way street, a mutual relationship. Both parties have something to offer one another. A mentor offers advice, information, and both professional and personal support. A protege offers fresh ideas, recognition for the mentor, innovative methods, and the creation of a new audience.

### Sociological Theory Contributing to Mentoring

One of the most directly relevant roles an institution plays for students is comprised of exposing them to diversity, presenting opportunities to explore, peer and adult models to emulate (in the context of this dissertation research--mentoring), and experiences that challenge currently held values, attitudes, and beliefs.

In a 1979 article by Pascarella and Terenzini, they study the interaction effects of Spady's and

Tinto's conceptual models of college dropout. The quality and frequency of the student-faculty interaction is cited as the most consistent pattern of interaction that positively influences persistence of entering "high risk" freshmen. Frequency of informal student-faculty contact (e.g., informal mentoring; socialization) is seen as crucial. They state that "such aspects of student-faculty relationships as the frequency of student-faculty informal contact beyond the classroom are in fact positively associated with college persistence." They state further in this 1979 article that the relationships with faculty "is seen as a particularly important influence on both academic and social integration," so much so that "the benefits of certain college experiences may be sufficient to override entering traits which often typify the dropout-prone student" (page 198). Tinto (1986) also states that it is important that this frequent faculty contact occur outside the classroom as well as within the classroom. In fact, Tinto's research shows that this kind of interaction is one of the most important forms of interaction impacting student persistence and has also been shown to be instrumental to a student's intellectual and social development as well. He states that, "the more frequent and rewarding these contacts, especially when they go beyond the requirements of academic work, the greater the likelihood of persistence and high levels of individual growth" (page 37). This, too, is the basis upon which my dissertation research is grounded.

Vincent Tinto is one of the best known and respected researchers of attrition and his Theoretical Model of Dropout Behavior has been widely considered and tested since it was introduced in 1975. His theory of persistence at the undergraduate level focuses on the reasons behind the actual dropping out or persistence of a student. Building upon the work of Spady (1970), Tinto theorizes that

> students enter a college or university with varying patterns of personal, family, and academic characteristics and skills, including initial dispositions and intentions with respect to college attendance and personal goals. These intentions and commitments are subsequently modified and reformulated on a continuing basis through a longitudinal series of interactions between the individual and the structures and members of the academic and social systems of the institution. Satisfying and rewarding encounters with the formal and informal academic and social systems of the institution are presumed to lead to greater integration in those systems and thus to student retention (cited in Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, p. 51).

A common thread running through Tinto's attrition research is that the decision to withdraw or persevere is influenced by the extent to which a student's intellectual and social integration occurs. He states,

> ...the more time faculty give to their students, and students to each other, the more likely are students to complete their education. Both academically and socially, such informal contacts appear to be essential components in the process of social and intellectual development of individuals and in the rewards they seek in entering higher education....institutions should encourage those contacts whenever and wherever possible (1982, page 697).

One point especially important to my research is Tinto's investigation of social conditions of the students and viewing the college as a social system with its own values and social structures. He found that "it is the individual's integration into the academic and social systems of the college that most directly relates to his or her continuance at that college" (1975:96) in that "lack of integration into the social system of the college will lead to low commitment to that social system and will increase the probability that individuals will decide to leave college and pursue alternative activities" (1975:92). In other words, those students who are not sufficiently integrated into the fabric of the college society (e.g., through socialization)--those who, for example, hold values highly divergent from those of the "social collectivity"--many times suffer from insufficient personal interaction with other members of that society. Mentoring, then, could and should be considered as a significant vehicle for students to achieve both personal and academic socialization.



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## Psychosocial Theory Contributing to Mentoring

The main focus of the definition of quality mentoring that was developed as a result of this dissertation research is reciprocity. A truly meaningful mentoring relationship is a "two-way" process. The responsibilities and benefits of a quality mentoring relationship are of equal importance to both the mentor and the protege. Long before the benefits and importance of mentoring interactions were "discovered" and more recently studied, Erik Erikson was conducting research on the human life cycle and developing psychosocial theories.

In his most influential book, Childhood and Society (1963; 1993), Erikson divided the human life cycle into eight stages of development. The main emphasis of this conception is on the development of human potential (Erikson, 1987:596). For purposes of this dissertation research, the emphasis is upon Stage VII, Adulthood: Generativity vs. Self-absorption. In discussing this stage, Erikson says that humankind has evolved in such a way that we are both a teaching as well as a learning animal (Erikson, 1987:607).

Dependency and maturity are reciprocal in that mature individuals need to be needed, and maturity is guided by the nature of that which must be cared for (Erikson, 1987:607). Erikson's term for this caring is generativity. Generativity is primarily the concern with establishing and guiding the next generation, including productivity and creativity; thus it is psychosocial in nature. From generativity emerges the strength of care. Erikson says that generativity encompasses procreativity, productivity, and creativity, and thus the generation of new beings as well as of new products and new ideas, including a kind of self-generation concerned with further identity development. Mentoring, then, is an excellent vehicle for passing on customs and knowledge to a new generation (protege) as well as contributing to a healthy personality through generativity for the mentor.

Following Erikson's lead, then, the point is that the mentor and the protege each make a contribution to a quality mentoring relationship. Where and when the relationship is more one sided, the relationship suffers as does the quality of the mentoring.

## Research Summary

Universities throughout the country are experimenting with "planned mentoring" to improve both retention and delayed graduation rates in circumstances of demographically underrepresented students, faculty, and administrators. But how is mentoring manifested in the higher education environment? What constitutes quality mentoring? What specifically are the salient features and functions of quality mentoring?

University of Minnesota circumstances and conditions present a unique opportunity to study three specific programs (one undergraduate and two at the graduate level) whose goals are to increase the institutional participation of persons of color. A central objective of the present research study is to compare and contrast the pragmatic effects, if any, of the mentoring processes. Due to the aforementioned national trend toward minority students' disproportionate concentration in specific fields, this current effort investigates three fields of study, two of which have limited minority student participation (biological sciences and business administration). Minority student and faculty representation is relatively greater in the third field (education).

Through qualitative case study methodology, participants in this research study spoke at considerable length regarding their views of the mentoring process, where it exists, and equally at length about problems when mentoring was absent. The kind of mentoring relationship experienced (or not experienced) was examined and dominant trends in student and faculty/staff perceptions of the mentoring process was described. Students, faculty, and administrators were interviewed in all three programs for the specific purpose of comparing and contrasting their perspectives of the mentoring process and its existence or non-existence in each particular program.

My research focused on three programs within three different colleges at the University of Minnesota. These programs are designed to recruit, retain, and graduate persons of color at the postsecondary level. The three programs were selected because of their differences with respect to the mentoring factor and also due to the varying degrees of underrepresentation of minorities within the disciplines. The mentoring factor within these three programs ranged from none to that's what the program

is all about. The research examined how the students and faculty perceived the mentoring process of the programs. I looked at the climate of the institution for persons of color and how mentoring would help enrich students' experiences. Information was gathered primarily from 40 one-on-one, in-depth interviews with students, faculty/mentors, and administrators.

***Program A*** is a graduate program in a professional school that serves American Indian students that began operation in Fall 1990 and it is the only such program in the nation. The program's objective is to provide professional training to Native Americans who will eventually be involved in tribal management activities with the goal of aiding tribal financial self-sufficiency. Mentoring is not a formal part of this program.

These students were first-generation college students. The first two students, both women, were seen as groundbreakers. As such, these students experienced more racism and criticism. Competition is a built-in part of this program and the very concept of competition goes against the roots of the American Indian culture which is very family-oriented and team-oriented. These two students felt inadequate and had a hard time really feeling like getting involved. There was an expressed fear of being lost in the system and not getting personalized attention. To overcome this, these two women met and combined as a team. Both agreed that it was helpful to have another woman Native American student there.

Over the next two years, three more women entered the program. All these students were pretty much on their own. Any mentoring that occurred was peer mentoring. The entering women students relied on the second year students for support. They shared information about instructors, particular classes and size of classes, the weather, and how many people were in the program. One entering student said that she expected there would be mentors in this program. Her idea of how graduate school worked was that there were mentors who were available as advisors. She concluded about her program, however, that "it just wasn't happening that way."

Women students entering the program after 1990 had it a bit easier because the first students had laid the foundation for those who followed. The first two women said that their classmates did not have a lot of experience with minorities but the following years' classes had many more minority students in them. Therefore, whereas the first students experienced racism, students who entered the program later did not. All of these students said mentoring would be a positive addition to the program and that because the bureaucracy of the university is so entrenched, to have somebody to talk to, someone they could relate to, another person of color, another female, would help give them emotional support.

One problem the first women graduates encountered was that their tribes did not understand the value of a graduate education. One of them stated that the tribe was not very receptive to her, as a woman coming into management, as no woman had ever achieved upper management within her tribe. She said they insulted her by offering her the same level job as when she left.

***Program B*** is an undergraduate intensive summer workshop in biological sciences for underrepresented populations (minorities and females) that began in 1989. Students come from all parts of the United States for ten weeks of independent research in the laboratories of faculty mentors within the college. Mentoring is planned and students are paired with faculty in various science disciplines.

The types, depth, and levels of mentoring described varied greatly. Reflections from the students ranged from one individual looking upon her mentor as a "friend," to another individual's recognition of blatant insensitivity on the part of the mentor. One student said:

> My mentor said I should come here and she seemed like she was really, you know, a friend. She called me a lot after that, like every other week. So, she seemed like she was going to be a personal friend, too. So I decided to come here for that reason...She's great! I know I'm fortunate because most people don't have mentors who are as open...She's always there and you can knock on her door all the time. And it's never, "Wait a second!" It's always, "Come in." She's never had a time when she's too busy when I ask her a question. She picked me up from the airport, which is unique, because no one else's mentor picked them up at the airport...And she invited me to her house for Fourth of July.

On the other hand, another student relates:

> I had a problem...Because I was leaving (for a rural site) at 7 in the morning and wasn't coming back until 6, I wasn't eating...I was missing everything (by leaving too early and getting back too late--cafeteria was closed). I contacted (program administrator)...and it came up that I wasn't eating...and I said, "Well, actually I'm missing everything. My friends are bringing stuff from the cafeteria." She said, "Well, I can get you a refrigerator." She was really great...You would think that he (mentor) would have thought of those sorts of things! Food is kind of important!

Commitment to and degree of mentoring provided by faculty varied significantly. One end of the scale could be described as total commitment to mentoring. The other end of the scale evidenced faculty either delegating significant mentoring responsibilities (in both degree and type) to their laboratory graduate research assistants, or using the summer undergraduate students as little more than cheap labor. For example, one mentor described her commitment to mentoring as follows:

> To take the students in, do a good job with them, and actually mentor them. One of the criticisms of many mentors is they're never around. And I think it's a serious commitment and if you don't want to do it--a lot of people get shoved off onto grad students or post docs, or somebody else in the lab, too. And that's a bad mistake, I think. At least I never wanted to give a lot of students to my graduate students.

Some mentors had no where near the commitment of that mentor and did, in fact, reject certain of his responsibilities:

> I didn't do a single thing this year. I was out of town on the banquet. I think I was out of town on the poster session. I was gone the entire time the poster was prepared. I didn't make a single presentation...And I felt bad about that. That's a lower level of participation than should be expected.

It is interesting to note that the College of Biological Sciences expects their faculty to carry out mentoring activities. As a matter of fact, mentoring is considered as a major element of a faculty's workload. This College's Workload Statement reads:

> A major component of the teaching load of many faculty is the mentoring of undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students in the conduct of research. While mentoring is an expensive teaching method, it is the only proven method of teaching students how to conduct modern research. Mentoring occupies a significant amount of the teaching time of faculty; it should be equivalent to one or more courses per term for research-active faculty.

***Program C*** began in Fall 1990 and is a graduate program for African Americans that is designed to increase the number of students and faculty of color in education. Recruitment is primarily directed at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) because HBCUs graduate a large percentage of students who receive bachelor's degrees in education and the liberal arts. This program is jointly funded by the Bush Foundation and the College of Education.

Even though at the time of the interviews this program did not have formalized mentoring, the students identified the program administrator as a mentor. In some cases, students also identified faculty and community mentors.

Regarding the administrator's mentoring, one student described it:

> Each quarter...we have a meeting...We all get together, talk about some business, things that have gone on. So that's as a group. But we also each quarter come in and talk to her about grades and progress...problems with the person you're working with, or with classes...give her a program outline, classes I had taken, classes I was going to take,

when I anticipate finishing.

The community mentoring interaction was described:

> Each one of us has a community mentor...They're usually in education...Somebody that we can call and some are taking the 'mentoree' out to dinner and, you know, just things in the community, church, or whatever. Each quarter we have a dinner. Everybody comes together.

These students also have a tight-knit social group among themselves. Students went to plays, out to clubs and concerts. They "had a friend to do something with. Just call somebody up and usually there's somebody available." As one student described it:

> We're very close and I guess that's probably because we're in this new environment...We're all from Historically Black Colleges. So we're used to being around a lot of Blacks. So when we come up here, I see Blacks, but I don't see a lot. And then some of them have different perspectives than we do, coming from the South...(There) the teachers really had a genuine interest in your education...This place is so impersonal and vast, you know, that within itself is a big difference!...I consider myself a pretty strong little person and I'm going to do what I have to do to survive anywhere.

It can be seen from these brief descriptions that these three programs have very different levels of mentoring. Further, mentors' attitudes toward mentoring vary from very committed to feeling badly that they did not fulfill their mentoring responsibilities.

**Challenges to the Institution**

Mentoring is not a panacea, but it should be viewed as an especially valuable means of intervention in the academy's attempt to meet the needs of culturally diverse students. Mentoring systematically addresses causes of culturally diverse student attrition and delayed graduation by 1) promoting greater student/faculty contact, communication and understanding; 2) encouraging the use of university resources designed to aid students with nonacademic problems; 3) intervening promptly with academic difficulties; and 4) creating a culturally validating psychosocial atmosphere. All will benefit if mentoring relationships are successful.

Major research institutions such as the University of Minnesota should intensify efforts to recruit more minority students, both at the baccalaureate and graduate levels. Perhaps most importantly, once persons of color have been recruited, postsecondary institutions must provide a hospitable climate if these students are to be retained, have positive growth experiences, and achieve graduation. Mentoring is one tool for increasing minority participation in higher education. It is important to note that students who leave a university because of negative experiences relate those experiences to potential students in their communities, thus, for example, creating the reputation that the university is insensitive to culturally diverse populations. In a sense, mentoring can be an important marketing tool because it sends a message that the university is a place where faculty, staff,and administrators care.

Mentoring programs should be designed to ensure as much interaction as possible with departments or programs that most affect the academic and social lives of culturally diverse students. Advertising and recruitment should emphasize the reciprocal benefits of participation to enhance the image of the mentoring relationship as a partnership rather than a "missionary" one.

As a founding member of the Coalition of Women Graduate Students at the University of Minnesota, I was part of a team of women graduate students who in 1993 and 1994 organized and presented two mentoring workshops and co-authored a publication entitled, "Improving the Climate for Women Graduate Students Through Quality Mentoring at the University of Minnesota." In that publication we stated that "the responsibility for mentoring rests collectively and individually with the regents, president, administrators, departments, faculty, and graduate students. If the University is to have effective

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quality mentoring, the University must encourage individuals and groups to play a crucial role in the process of developing, implementing, and promoting mentoring programs and relationships...A student-centered approach is at the heart of our recommendations. Graduate students must play a central role in all efforts to improve mentoring" (page 6). We made a number of recommendations (i.e., challenges) for improving mentoring relationships at the University of Minnesota. These include:

To the regents, as the body that sets policy and vision for the University, we ask that they:

- issue a policy statement in support of mentoring;
- back up this statement with budget allocations;
- hold the faculty and administration accountable for quality mentoring;
- require an annual report on the status of mentoring from the president.

To the president, as the interpreter of University policy and vision, we ask the president to:

- set University policy that supports mentoring;
- hold college/unit administrators with academic units accountable for quality mentoring;
- delegate responsibility for coordination of University mentoring to the Graduate School;
- make budget allocations to support these efforts;
- require an annual report on the status of mentoring from the Graduate School;
- submit an annual report to the regents detailing the progress made in mentoring.

To vice presidents/administrators with academic units, as implementors of University policies set by the president, we ask the vice presidents to:

- require departments to develop, implement, and promote mentoring activities, programs, and relationships;
- make budget allocations to support these activities;
- work with the graduate school in the development, implementation, and promotion of mentoring and provide information to the graduate school for an annual report to the president;
- meet at least annually with graduate students to discuss the progress of mentoring in their respective academic units.

To the graduate school, that has as one of its central purposes advanced training of women and men in a wide variety of fields, we ask that the graduate school:

- coordinate the university's overall mentoring efforts and take a leadership role in developing, implementing, and promoting mentoring activities, programs, and relationships;
- establish a center for mentoring responsible for promoting,designing,and implementing innovative mentoring programs including collaborative efforts between faculty and students;
- establish career development as a goal of the graduate school;
- make budget allocations to support the center for mentoring and career development;
- meet at least annually with graduate students to discuss the progress of mentoring university-wide and to provide advocates for graduate students;
- submit an annual report to the president detailing the progress in mentoring of graduate students.

To the deans, as the implementors of University policy set by administrators, we ask deans to:

- require departments to work with the graduate school to develop, implement, and promote mentoring activities, programs, and relationships;
- identify, reward, and advertise the pilot programs and individuals that contribute to the improved mentoring of women graduate students;
- make budget allocations to support these activities;
- meet at least annually with graduate students to discuss the progress of mentoring in their respective academic units;
- submit an annual report to their vice president detailing their progress in mentoring graduate students.

To departments, as the implementors of University policy set by deans, we ask chairs to:

- develop, implement, and promote mentoring activities, programs, and relationships;
- train faculty and students to be better mentors/proteges;
- establish awards/recognition to encourage improved mentoring;
- make budget allocations to support these activities;
- establish a policy to have graduate students evaluate each faculty member for their ability to mentor graduate students (especially women) and include these evaluations when considering

promotions and new hires;

- establish an additional evaluation process for every graduate student to evaluate their director of graduate studies and their faculty advisor(s);
- begin these evaluations immediately and adjust salary/fringe benefit allocations accordingly;
- work with the graduate school in the development, implementation, and promotion of mentoring and provide to the graduate school information for an annual report to the president;
- meet at least annually with graduate students and faculty to discuss the progress of mentoring in their respective departments;
- submit an annual report to the dean detailing their progress in mentoring graduate students.

To faculty, as the single group actually able to improve faculty mentoring of students at this institution, we ask that faculty members:

- develop a written policy on mentoring women, including how to help them reach their social, personal, and academic potential;
- accept the mentoring of women as a central part of their commitment to graduate education;
- work to encourage and support women graduate students and faculty as a vital force in the graduate school;
- work to prevent sexism and sexual harassment at this institution;
- accept that most graduate students today have different needs than faculty had when they were in graduate school (e.g., spouses, children, disabilities, etc.);
- actively participate in the development, implementation, and promotion of quality mentoring for women graduate students by working closely with graduate students, faculty, and administration;
- initiate discussion of mentoring with graduate students;
- attend workshops and training sessions to improve mentoring skills;
- submit an annual report to the department detailing their progress in mentoring graduate students.

We ask graduate students to:

- understand that quality mentoring is a two-way street and that graduate students have responsibilities to their research, to their mentors, and to their department;
- accept mentoring as a central part of their graduate school experience;
- actively participate in the development, implementation, and promotion of mentoring by working with faculty and other graduate students in their department and in the broader university community;
- see themselves as mentors as well as proteges and act on this by working to establish mentor/protege relationships.

We further made recommendations for developing, implementing, and promoting mentoring activities, programs, and relationships as follows:

- faculty must be rewarded for all mentoring activities, including advising;
- graduate students must be involved in all areas of mentoring development;
- all mentoring efforts must be evaluated on an ongoing basis;
- diversity must be central to the development of current mentoring efforts;
- more women faculty (especially full professors) and professors of color are needed;
- faculty and directors of graduate studies must strongly advocate mentoring;
- sexual harassment and sex discrimination must end.

**Summary**

This dissertation research is intended to make several contributions to higher education. First, it may contribute to the development of this university's and other universities' planning to improve the recruitment and retention of women students of color. This research must be understood within the context of a much broader setting. If mentoring programs are to be successful in a climate of ethnic pluralism, formal commitment of each institution to specific goals of retention, mentoring, and diversity pertinent to its circumstance and location is critical. The commitment may come in the form of mandated policy



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statements, financial support, and allocations of space, personnel, and communication structures. In addition, the inclusion of mentoring as an acceptable service activity for faculty promotion and tenure can be an excellent signal that the university community views mentoring as truly important. In higher education institutions, mentoring activities need to be recognized and rewarded if they are to achieve the goals set for them.

The mentoring process can help to create an academic and social milieu where diversity is valued. Thus, theoretically, if mentoring is taken seriously and is institutionalized, the higher education institution will be able to attract more underrepresented students, more faculty members will become sensitized to the experiences of students of color, a significant number of underrepresented students will be able to graduate, and racial and cultural groups will be strengthened socially and, eventually, economically. Furthermore, with this emphasis on interpersonal interaction, cooperative problem solving, cross-cultural understanding, and institutional commitment, mentoring can help to create a university setting in which diversity is not only valued but expected.

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